

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH
PROGRAM SUPPORT BUREAU
QUALITY IMPROVEMENT DIVISION (FY 2014-2015)

TEST CALL GUIDELINES

The California Code of Regulations, Title 9, Chapter 11, Section 1810.405(d) specifies: “Each MHP shall provide a statewide, toll-free telephone number that functions 24-hours a day, seven days a week, with language capacity in the languages spoken by the beneficiaries of the county that will provide information to beneficiaries about how to access specialty mental health services, including services needed to treat a beneficiary’s urgent condition, and how to use the beneficiary problem resolution and fair hearings processes.”

The California Code of Regulations, Title 9, Chapter 11, Section 1810.405(f) specifies: “The MHP shall maintain a written log of the initial requests for specialty mental health services from beneficiaries of the MHP. The requests shall be recorded whether they are made via telephone, in writing, or in person. The log shall contain the name of the beneficiary, the date of the request, and the initial disposition of the request.”

The California Code of Regulations, Title 9, Chapter 11, Section 1810.410(d)(1) specifies: “Each MHP shall provide: a statewide, toll-free telephone number available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, with language capacity in all the languages spoken by the beneficiaries of the MHP as required by Section 1810.405(d).”

PURPOSE OF THE TEST CALLS

Calls to test the MHP’s ACCESS Line (not clinic or other hotline numbers) in the following areas:

- Availability 24-hours a day, seven days a week
- Knowledge and helpfulness of the Access Line staff
- Recording of the call on requests-for-service log
- Response capability in a non-English language
- Information on how to use the beneficiary problem resolution and fair hearings processes

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE TEST CALLS

- A) **Do not call with an emergency or crisis scenario.** Please call with a routine request for specialty mental health services. If you state that this is an emergency or crisis call, the MHP may contact law enforcement or other emergency personnel.

- B) **Make the call an initial request for specialty mental health services.** Only requests for specialty mental health services and only initial requests for services must be logged by ACCESS.
- C) **Inquire about services for yourself or a family member.** Technically, only requests for mental health services for Medi-Cal beneficiaries must be logged, but most MHPs record requests from any family member, too. Please refuse all efforts by ACCESS Line employees to arrange an assessment appointment for you at the clinic site. Remember, do not make or accept an appointment as it will tie-up needed clinical services. Instead, you could obtain a phone number and inform the ACCESS Line employee that you have chosen to contact the clinic directly.
- D) **Keep the call short and succinct.** Do not unnecessarily tie-up the toll free line with a long call. Keep the line available to those who may need assistance.
- E) **If asked, deny that you are a Medi-Cal beneficiary.** Otherwise, you will be asked for your Medi-Cal #.
- F) **If asked, give a name that you feel comfortable providing to the MHP staff. You may use any name that you choose.** Write down the name given, so the call can be located in the MHP call log.
- G) **If asked, identify yourself as a resident of the county being tested.** Some MHPs may record non-resident calls differently or may not log non-resident calls. You can provide a local street address and phone number, or give general information such as a few cross-streets or landmarks. You may also state that you just moved to the area and/or that you prefer not to give your address.
- H) **Note the time and date of your call and, if known, the name of ACCESS Line employee.** Test calls should be made after-hours and on weekends, only. Write down the name you used and the time and date that the call was made. This is important in locating your call in the MHP log. If possible, note the name of the ACCESS Line employee. Having the employee's name is important in providing feedback regarding the call and your experience.
- I) **Complete calls after hours (Monday – Friday before 8:00 AM and after 5:00 PM), on weekends (Friday 5:00PM – Monday 7:59AM, and/or Holidays only (e.g. Thursday July 4th, July 4th 8 am until July 5th 7:59 am).**
- J) **Do not identify yourself as a Test Caller.**